

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks. Prior to entry of this response, Claims 31-50 were pending in the application, of which Claims 31 and 34 are independent. Claims 27-30 have been withdrawn from consideration. In the Final Office Action dated June 28, 2004, Claims 31-50 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 and Claims 31-33, 38-39, and 46-50 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Following this response, Claims 31-50 remain in this application. Applicants hereby address the Examiner's rejections in turn.

I. Rejection of the Claims Under 35 U.S.C. §112, First Paragraph

In the Final Office Action dated June 28, 2004, the Examiner rejected Claims 34-45 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way to reasonably convey to one skilled in the art, at the time the application was filed, that the inventor had possession of the claimed invention. Claim 34 has been amended, and Applicants respectfully submit that the amendment overcomes this rejection and adds no new matter. Support for the claimed "downwardly-angled outlet" may be found at least on page 30, lines 3-27. Claims 36, 37, 42, and 45 have been amended to comport with the amendments made to Claim 34. No new matter has been added to Claims 36, 37, 42, and 45. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection of Claims 34-45.

II. Rejection of the Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, Second Paragraph

In the Final Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 31-50 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the Applicants regard as their invention. Claims 31 and 34 have been amended, and Applicants respectfully submit that the amendment overcomes this rejection and adds no new matter. Accordingly, Claims 31-50 are not indefinite, and Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection of Claims 31-50.

III. Rejection of the Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

In the Final Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 31-33, 38-39, and 50 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,608,473 ("*Paek*") in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,988,374 ("*Harding*"), and Japanese Patent No. JP 8-91862 ("*Kazuya*"). Independent Claim 31 has been amended, and Applicants respectfully submit that the amendment overcomes this rejection and adds no new matter. Support for this amendment to Claim 31 can be found at least on page 29 of the specification, lines 20-24.

Amended Claim 31 is patentably distinguishable over the cited art in that it recites, for example, "a distributor body having a substantially annular axis, the distributor body configured to substantially tangentially to the annular axis receive". Applicants respectfully submit that *Paek*, *Harding*, and *Kazuya*, either individually or in combination, at least do not disclose or suggest amended Claim 31's aforementioned recitation. For example, while *Harding* discloses a supply hose 15, *Harding* does not

suggest or disclose a distributor body having a substantially annular axis, much less a distributor body configured to tangentially to the annular axis and to uniformly introduce and forcedly direct conditioning gas. Moreover, in contrast to the Examiner's contention, Applicants respectfully submit that "a distributor body having a substantially annular axis, the distributor body configured to substantially tangentially to the annular axis receive" is a structural recitation and not a process stage. Accordingly, independent Claim 31 patentably distinguishes the present invention over the cited art, and Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection of Claim 31.

Dependent Claims 32-33 and 46-50 are also allowable at least for the reasons above regarding independent Claim 31, and by virtue of their dependency upon independent Claim 31. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection of dependent Claims 32-33 and 46-50.

Furthermore, dependent Claims 38-39 are also allowable at least for the reasons above regarding independent Claim 34, and by virtue of their dependency upon independent Claim 34. (See section I. above regarding the rejection of independent Claim 34 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.) Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection of dependent Claims 38-39.

IV. Conclusion

Applicants respectfully request that this Amendment After Final be entered by the Examiner, placing the claims in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully submit that the proposed amendments of the claims do not raise new issues or necessitate the undertaking of any additional search of the art by the Examiner, since all of the

elements and their relationships claimed were either earlier claimed or inherent in the claims as examined. Therefore, this Amendment should allow for immediate action by the Examiner.

Finally, Applicants respectfully submit that the entry of the Amendment would place the application in better form for appeal, should the Examiner dispute the patentability of the pending claims.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the claimed invention, as amended, is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious in view of the prior art references cited against this application. Applicants therefore request the entry of this Amendment, the Examiner's reconsideration and reexamination of the application, and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims, as amended, are patentable over the cited references. The preceding arguments are based only on the arguments in the Official Action, and therefore do not address patentable aspects of the invention that were not addressed by the Examiner in the Official Action. The claims may include other elements that are not shown, taught, or suggested by the cited art. Accordingly, the preceding argument in favor of patentability is advanced without prejudice to other bases of patentability.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this amendment and charge any additional required fees to our Deposit Account No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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